

# UFT's NEW MEMBER HANDBOOK



- Help at Every Level
- **Your Union**
- Your Money
- **Benefits**
- Certification Primer for New Teachers
- **Your Professional Growth**
- UFT Professional Committees
- **Some Essential Things to Know**
- Safety and Discipline



## A MESSAGE FROM UFT PRESIDENT MICHAEL MULGREW

Dear Colleagues,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to your union, the United Federation of Teachers, and to your new profession – one of the finest and most important in the world!

As educators – teachers, paras, guidance counselors and so many others – we are responsible for the future of our youth, and I have no doubt that each and every one of you will help make dreams come true. The work that we do in our classrooms and our schools every day is critically important for our students, our communities and our society as a whole. But it isn't easy. You will be challenged every day of your careers.

That's why all of us at the UFT stand ready to support you however we can to see that you become the best educators you can be. Whether you need help with licensing and certification, information about the new teacher evaluation system or special education reform or support to improve your working conditions and your students' learning conditions, we are here, only a phone call away.

The UFT is committed to making every single school a place where educators want to work and parents want to send their children. That's why we fight for:

- smaller class sizes;
- better funding;
- adequate supplies and instructional materials;
- a greater voice for parents in the decisions that affect their children;
- competitive salaries and benefits; and
- support and respect for educators and the work that we do.

You should especially avail yourselves of the resources offered by our UFT Teacher Center. Staffed by experts in educational best practices, the center is an incredible source of support for you to improve your pedagogy as you grow as an educator.

As you begin the school year, I hope you will take the time to talk with your school's chapter leader. He or she will be able to help you as you navigate the world of teaching, answering your questions about both pedagogy and your rights as public employees and as union members.

And I, of course, also hope you'll take the next step and become actively involved in your school's chapter. Remember: You are the UFT. We face many challenges as educators, but if we are united I have no doubt that we will overcome them.

Most important, however, I hope that you will enjoy this exciting new journey on which you are embarking. We have much work to do – both inside our schools as educators and outside them as advocates for our students and school communities – but it's important to have fun too. Enjoy your students and your time in your schools, and know that you are making a profound difference.

I wish you all the best and hope that this is the first year of a great adventure and a satisfying new career as a New York City public school educator.

Sincerely,

Michael Mulgrew, UFT President



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To find UFT Teacher Center sites, search [www.ufttc.org](http://www.ufttc.org) or print a directory.

For Teacher Center professional activities, check out [www.uft.org](http://www.uft.org) and the *New York Teacher's* TNT page.

Need a master's degree or deeper knowledge of your field? Try the Teacher Center's [degree/certificate programs](#) and courses. We'll mail you a special *New York Teacher Education Supplement* three times a year.

P credits — Not for certification, but another way to earn professional development credits to fulfill requirements and earn more money. For low-cost, 30-hour, 3-credit courses after school and on weekends throughout the city register at <https://pci.nycenet.edu/asdpd/>.

## HELP AT EVERY LEVEL

OK. You're finally in your classroom. Now what? You have decisions to make — practical decisions about how to arrange your room, manage your classes and plan your lessons. The tone you set can have a major impact on how the class functions.

### You're Not Alone

Luckily, you don't have to figure all this out by yourself. There are experts in your school who can provide guidance and experience. Some schools have a professional development team that may include a literacy coach and a math coach or a UFT Teacher Center specialist. These colleagues have years of classroom experience, and they're eager to share their knowledge.

They will:

- Help you problem-solve instructional and classroom management issues.
- Show you how to construct standards-based classroom assignments and assessments that will assure you that students are learning the subject matter while preparing for standardized tests.
- Meet with you and, at your request, come into your classroom to make suggestions and even
- Provide demonstration lessons.
- Offer support in a non-evaluative way.

### Your UFT Chapter Leader

The union members in your school elected this person to represent you. The chapter leader is your best source for information about your rights and benefits. If you haven't yet joined the UFT, he or she will have a membership card — or you can sign up online at [www.uft.org](http://www.uft.org).

### Your School Secretaries

School secretaries — also UFT colleagues — know how to cut through the red tape. The payroll secretary, in particular, handles forms and records for attendance, payroll, health benefits and other matters of immediate importance to you. Connecting with your payroll secretary will get you reliable answers to your questions.

### Mentors

In addition, if you're eligible — generally speaking that means if you haven't had prior teaching experience — you'll get one-on-one mentoring throughout your first year.

- Mentors are experienced colleagues who have trained extensively in ways to best support you.

- They will do demonstration lessons, co-teach classes with you and offer constructive feedback on your teaching practices.
- They will help you diagnose student work, make suggestions about lesson plans and help you connect to people and instructional resources in your building.
- They will work with you on a non-evaluative, non-judgmental basis. Translation: Your discussions will be professional and confidential.

**If you believe you are eligible and have not heard from a mentor by mid-September (or for spring-term hires, two weeks into the term), see your UFT chapter leader or call your UFT borough office.**

## COACH, MENTOR: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

- Coaches focus on content (math and literacy) and work with all staff in a building.
- Mentors help new teachers learn teaching strategies and classroom management.
- Mentors and coaches often collaborate. They support best practices and influence the culture of a school.

## UFT TEACHER CENTER

The UFT Teacher Center is the union's nationally known professional development program. Its professional development philosophy is straightforward and practical, emphasizing instruction based on the state and city standards and ongoing, collegial support.

- Teacher Center staffers can help you deepen your content knowledge and enhance your teaching skills.
- They are your colleagues. The wisdom they share is based on practical classroom experience.
- They can offer you advice, encouragement and the opportunity to try out and master new techniques.

Their goal is simple: to help you become a dynamic and knowledgeable teaching professional.



# YOUR UNION

As a UFT member, you become part of an organization that's dedicated to:

- Helping you succeed in your career.
- Securing you a good salary and benefits.
- Improving the education of New York City's schoolchildren.

Founded in 1960 but with a heritage going back to the early 20th century, the United Federation of Teachers is a dynamic force, fighting in City Hall and in Albany for whatever it takes to further those goals. With over 200,000 members representing not just nonsupervisory city school employees but also home childcare providers, hospital nurses and other healthcare providers and private school educators, the UFT is part of a national network of locals of the 1.5 million-member American Federation of Teachers.

This booklet is proof of the UFT's commitment, as well as of the enormous resources that your union puts at your command. Here's a brief look at ways you can tap into the union's capacity:

## At Your School

The basic unit of the UFT is the chapter — that is, the union members in your school. Every three years your chapter elects a chapter leader to be your union representative. This person is your first source of information and help on everything from salary to benefits. He or she:

- Knows what is happening in your school and in your union and whom to see or call about every situation.
- Can clear up misunderstandings and help you get support and supplies.
- Meets regularly with the principal on matters of importance to chapter members.
- Represents you in dealings with the school administration.
- Tries to resolve any situation that may violate your contractual protections. If that fails, your chapter leader can help you file a grievance or, in some cases, file the grievance on your behalf.
- Represents your school at the union's highest decision-making body, the Delegate Assembly (DA), which meets monthly to consider issues facing members and to shape union positions and policies. Delegates vote on the UFT's political endorsements, set the union's legislative agenda and adopt resolutions on education, labor and human rights policies.
- The union is run as a representative democracy.

Each school has at least one person, elected by the union members in your school, who joins your chapter leader in representing you at the monthly meetings of the UFT Delegate Assembly. The number of delegates in a school varies with the size of the union membership. If he or she has not already found you, ask a colleague to introduce you or ask who the chapter leader is and introduce yourself.

## At UFT Borough Offices

The UFT has offices in every borough where you can find experts — all fellow UFT members — to answer questions about salary, certification, educational issues, health and other benefits, safety, pension and more.

The offices are open until 6 p.m. most days, until 7 p.m. one day a week. Throughout the school year, each borough office hosts many meetings and workshops that help new teachers.

Here are some of the borough office staffers to whom you can turn.

- Your **borough representative** is a union leader who coordinates all UFT activities in that borough.
- Your **district representative** (DR) is a union leader who works to resolve issues, usually raised by chapter leaders, that cannot be settled at the school level. You may meet your DR at your borough office, or perhaps your chapter leader will invite her or him into your school.
- **Salary representatives** can help you with payroll problems or delays, and check that you are getting the right salary.
- **Pension consultants** can respond to your questions about the pension system.
- **Educational liaisons** can advise you about certification requirements as well as classroom issues.
- **Safety representatives** are specially trained to respond to incidents as well as environmental health and safety issues.

## Functional Chapters

Although we call the union the United Federation of Teachers, over the years it has grown to include many other educators and professionals. Although working at different tasks, they share common interests and concerns. So that they can clearly articulate their concerns, these groups have formed chapters of their own, commonly known as



**What has the UFT won for newer teachers?**  
As part of its campaign to gain greater respect for teachers, the union has negotiated a 44 percent increase in salaries since 2002.

During negotiations, the union puts a high priority on new teachers. Here are some examples of that. The union:

- Prevented layoffs of nearly 4,500 new teachers in 2010.
- Refused to cut pay and benefits for incoming teachers to fund a raise for others.
- Added a \$1,000/year longevity payment for teachers with 5 to 10 years of service.
- Increased starting salaries significantly.
- Launched a new transfer system that vastly increases newer teachers' opportunities to change schools.

You have access to an array of benefits that will enhance your financial well-being and provide discounts for entertainment, car rental and travel.

Some of these benefits are provided by our statewide affiliate, New York State United Teachers, while others come through our national parent, the American Federation of Teachers.

For More Information: For AFT benefits see [www.aft.org/benefits](http://www.aft.org/benefits) for an ever-growing array of benefits, from no-annual-fee credit cards to student loan consolidation.

For NYSUT benefits call NYSUT Member Benefits at 1-800-626-8101 or visit the Member Benefits website [www.nysut.org](http://www.nysut.org).

Learn more about how your UFT contract protects you. Read or download "Know Your Rights" at [www.uft.org/our-rights](http://www.uft.org/our-rights).

functional chapters. Functional chapters have their own elected leadership. The interests of functional chapters are represented on union decision-making bodies such as the Executive Board and the DA. They hold regular meetings to map out strategy and identify members' concerns. Some functional chapters, such as guidance counselors and secretaries, have their own contracts. Here are some of the UFT's functional chapters that may have members in your school: attendance teachers; guidance counselors; hearing educational services; laboratory specialists and technicians; nurses and therapists; paraprofessionals; school secretaries; social workers and psychologists; speech teachers.

## At UFT Headquarters

At union headquarters, located at 52 Broadway, New York, NY 10004, you'll find:

- UFT Certification Services
- The Teacher Center headquarters and conference center, where there are many graduate level classes, educational workshops and professional conferences.
- The UFT Welfare Fund
- Union departments (including Political Action, Grievance, Safety and Just for Fun)
- UFT officers, whom members elect every three years. They:
  - Shape policy.
  - Negotiate and enforce our contract.
  - Deal with the school system, and city and state agencies.
  - Assure that the UFT efficiently delivers services to you.
  - Work to create public and political support to improve teaching and learning conditions in public schools.
  - Fight to ensure that educators have a decent income, long-term economic security, and professional autonomy and fairness on the job.

The UFT Constitution specifies that five of the

seven vice presidents come from:

- Elementary schools.
- Middle schools.
- Academic high schools.
- Career/technical high schools.
- Special education.

A sixth VP champions education issues and the seventh represents members who are not employees of the New York City Department of Education, such as educators in private or charter schools or hospital nurses.

## Where Do My UFT Dues Go?

Members' dues pay for the full array of services that your union provides to support you and your career — everything from creating educational support services to negotiating and enforcing the contract; to working on regulations at the city, state and federal levels; to providing you with professional, social and entertainment activities; to producing this New Teacher Handbook.

Membership in the UFT is voluntary, but about 95 percent of employees eligible to join the UFT do so because they understand that standing together with their colleagues brings them strength.

Under state law, those who choose not to join are nevertheless covered by all of the contract's provisions, including the salary schedule, and the UFT must represent them in every instance in which we would represent a member. All this costs money, so the law requires that nonmembers pay an "agency fee" that is akin to dues.

Only UFT members can vote on proposed contracts and in UFT elections at the school and citywide levels. If you are not yet a member, see your school chapter leader.

# YOUR MONEY

## YOUR SALARY

As a teacher, you're motivated by idealism, a desire to help children succeed and a love of learning. You work hard, far beyond the hours school is in session, to provide your students with the best

education you can. Most assuredly, you deserve to be paid well for your efforts, as well as to have suitable benefits and good working conditions. The UFT's contract with the city and the DOE is the linchpin of your financial benefits. Through unrelenting effort and union solidarity spanning decades, the UFT has negotiated higher salaries,

excellent health benefits and a pension that others envy. It hasn't been easy, because the employer always has its own priorities, which don't necessarily coincide with ours. But when the UFT's Negotiating Committee reaches a tentative agreement, union members get to vote and the agreement takes effect only if a majority ratifies it.

Here's a look at your salary package:

### How Much Will I Earn?

- The amount of your paycheck depends on:
- The salary schedule that the union and the city negotiate in the contract.
  - How long you have been teaching.
  - Credits and degrees you earn beyond your bachelor's degree.

The salary schedule is complex. It allows you to increase your earnings as you gain experience and accumulate graduate credits and a master's degree. New teachers with different educational credentials and amounts of prior experience may start at different rates of pay.

### How to Read Your Pay Stub

- It's important to check your pay stub to be sure you are getting the correct salary with the proper deductions. To verify that you are getting the right amount on each paycheck, look for the words "REGULAR PAY" and multiply that number by 24 (the total number of pay periods each year).
- That number should equal the gross amount you expect based on your years of service (salary step) and approved differentials.
  - If you think this annual salary is incorrect, talk to your payroll secretary, then check with a salary rep in your UFT borough office.

REVISED 5/99		The City of New York					EMPLOYEE					Payroll Management System									
ITEM #		PAY PERIOD			PAYDATE			DIRECT DEPOSIT PAY STATEMENT					PAYROLL #		WORK UNIT		CHECK NUMBER		DISTRIBUTION #		
		06/01/13			06/15/13			06/14/13													
PENSION #		ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSFER INFORMATION					JSN		FEDERAL TAX EXEMPT		STATE TAX EXEMPT		REFERENCE #		CD		EMPLOYEE NAME				
							1		A 3		A 3										
TAX INFO		TOTAL EARNINGS		FEDERAL TAX		SOCIAL SECURITY		MEDICARE		STATE TAX		CITY TAX		CITY WAIVER		TOTAL DEDUCTIONS THIS PERIOD					
THIS PERIOD		2,795.63		350.58		173.33		40.53		139.48		86.07				1,050.92					
YEAR TO DATE		30,751.93		3,856.38		1,906.62		445.90		1,534.28		946.77				NET PAY					
DESCRIPTION		UNITS / HOUR		AMT. EARNED PRIOR PERIOD		UNITS / HOUR		AMT. EARNED THIS PERIOD		LEAVE BALANCE AS OF:		08/07/13				1,744.71					
RECURRING GROS								2,795.63		DESCRIPTION		BALANCE AVAILABLE H.R. MM		DESCRIPTION		BALANCE AVAILABLE H.R. MM					
										CAR TOTAL		45 00									
Note: Leave Balances are based on the most current data from the Cumulative Absence Reserve screen in EIS. Data is based on Pay Stub printing date																					
DESCRIPTION		AMOUNT THIS PERIOD		GROSS AMOUNT OR TOTAL INSTALLMENT NO		BALANCE DUE OR RETAILER CREDIT		DESCRIPTION		AMOUNT THIS PERIOD		GROSS AMOUNT OR TOTAL INSTALLMENT NO		BALANCE DUE OR RETAILER CREDIT							
UFT-POL DUE S		-10.00						TRS 414H STD		-83.87											
TRS AGE 55 PROG		-51.72						UFT		-49.89											
TR PN LNS		-65.45		120		29															



CURRENT TEACHER SALARY SCHEDULE (EFFECTIVE MAY 19, 2008)								
	BA C1	C1+PD	BA + 30 C2	C2+ID	EARNED MA OR EQUIV C2+PD	C2+ID+PD	MA+30 C6	EARNED MA OR EQUIV + 30 C6+PD
1a	45,530	49,831	47,124	50,071	51,425	54,372	53,019	57,320
1b	45,530	49,831	47,124	50,071	51,425	54,372	53,019	57,320
2a	48,434	52,735	50,028	52,975	54,329	57,276	55,923	60,224
2b	48,434	52,735	50,028	52,975	54,329	57,276	55,923	60,224
3a	48,836	53,137	50,430	53,377	54,731	57,678	56,325	60,626
3b	48,836	53,137	50,430	53,377	54,731	57,678	56,325	60,626
4a	49,543	53,844	51,137	54,084	55,438	58,385	57,032	61,333
4b	49,543	53,844	51,137	54,084	55,438	58,385	57,032	61,333
5a	50,153	54,454	51,747	54,694	56,048	58,995	57,642	61,943
5b	50,153	54,454	51,747	54,694	56,048	58,995	57,642	61,943
6a	50,812	55,113	52,406	55,353	56,707	59,654	58,301	62,602
6a+L5	51,812	56,113	53,406	56,353	57,707	60,654	59,301	63,602
6b	51,744	56,045	53,338	56,285	57,639	60,586	59,233	63,534
6b+L5	52,744	57,045	54,338	57,285	58,639	61,586	60,233	64,534
7a	53,128	57,429	54,722	57,669	59,023	61,970	60,617	64,918
7a+L5	54,128	58,429	55,722	58,669	60,023	62,970	61,617	65,918
7b	56,370	60,671	57,964	60,911	62,265	65,212	63,859	68,160
7b+L5	57,370	61,671	58,964	61,911	63,265	66,212	64,859	69,160
8a	59,404	63,705	60,998	63,945	65,299	68,246	66,893	71,194
8a+L5	60,404	64,705	61,998	64,945	66,299	69,246	67,893	72,194
8b	63,006	67,307	64,600	67,547	68,901	71,848	70,495	74,797
8b+L5	64,006	68,307	65,600	68,547	69,901	72,848	71,495	75,796
8b+L10	67,095	71,396	68,689	71,636	72,990	75,937	74,584	78,885
8b+L13	69,197	73,498	70,791	73,738	75,092	78,039	76,686	80,987
8b+L15	73,636	77,937	75,230	78,177	79,531	82,478	81,125	85,426
8b+L18	74,800	79,101	76,394	79,341	80,695	83,642	82,289	86,590
8b+L20	83,412	87,713	85,006	87,953	89,307	92,254	90,901	95,202
8b+L22	88,259	92,560	89,853	92,800	94,154	97,101	95,748	100,049
L5	1,000							
L10	4,089							
L13	6,191							
L15	10,630							
L18	11,794							
L20	20,406							
L22	25,253							

The new five-year longevity increment of \$1,000 shall be paid to appointed teachers with 5 years up to 10 years of pedagogical service in the NYC Public Schools.

Do you have prior experience?

- If you taught elsewhere or had work experience related to your license area, you may qualify for a higher salary step.
- Check with your school’s UFT chapter leader or call a salary rep at your UFT borough office for more information.
- You must apply for this credit. The DOE does not grant it automatically.

**C6+PD:** This is the *second differential*. It can be achieved in several ways:

- With a master’s degree plus another 30 credits that were taken after the date of your bachelor’s but not as part of your master’s credits. The credits can be from undergraduate or graduate courses.
  - With professional development courses and/or activities approved by the chancellor.
  - By getting National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification. Differentials are not automatically awarded. *You must apply for them* within six months of completing your coursework.
  - Differentials are paid as of Feb. 1, July 1 and Sept. 1, respectively, for work you’ve completed in the previous fall, spring and summer semesters.
  - For example, if you complete your coursework by Jan. 31 and file by July 31, the DOE will pay your differential in the fall semester with arrears back to Feb. 1.
- Apply for prior service salary credit. If you taught in another school system, worked as a regular or per diem substitute in the New York City system or, for certain licenses, had nonteaching experience related to your license area, you may qualify for salary credit and placement on a step above 1A. You must apply for credit within six months. At the UFT’s urging, the DOE increased the amount of credit you can receive for prior experience. Now you can start at anywhere up to Step 8B. That means that as of May 2008, someone with eight years of credited experience and 30 credits above a master’s degree would start at \$74,797.

DOE’s New Differential and Salary Step Application Process

The DOE’s Salary Unit, now called the Office of Salary Services (OSS), uses a new online salary differential and step application process for all teachers, including secretaries.

Applications, as well as eligibility requirements, can be accessed at the OSS website: <http://schools.nyc.gov/teachersalary>, or directly through the payroll portal: <https://payrollportal.nycboe.net>.

You must have a DOE email address to access the online application.

Once the online application is completed, the application must be printed. A tracking number is assigned to the application for salary differentials. Transcripts still must be submitted to the DOE. Original transcripts along with the application are to be submitted to 65 Court Street, Room 102,

Brooklyn, New York 11201. Members who hand-deliver their application will get a receipt. It is strongly suggested that if members cannot hand-deliver their applications they should send them return receipt.

Members will electronically receive a Certificate of Salary Status when the differential is processed.

With this new online process members no longer need to resubmit their transcript each time they apply for another differential. They only need to submit original transcripts for the additional credits they earned to obtain the differential for which they are applying.

When Should I Apply for Salary Step Placement?

All newly hired teachers must report their prior work experience in their online application (TSN) for employment. This information will be automatically sent to the new online salary step application via the payroll portal. When teachers are notified, members will be asked to go the payroll portal and validate the information that has been pre-populated on the form. If they do not validate the form, the Office of Salary Services will validate on their behalf. If teachers have not entered any previous work experience they will automatically be placed on Salary Step 1A and granted an equated date that coincides with their first day of employment. This equated date is one of two dates in which you will automatically advance to the next salary step each year (the other is in March).

Problems with Your Paycheck?

Delays in getting paid, errors in the payment amount and other paycheck problems sometimes cause new teachers headaches, especially when bills for housing, transportation and courses are piling up.

The UFT can help you cut through the red tape and resolve paycheck problems with the DOE. *It should take the DOE one pay period (two weeks) to get a newly hired teacher on the payroll.*

Delays are less common since the UFT lobbied successfully for a law that requires the DOE to pay interest on late payments. Here’s what to do if problems occur:

**No paycheck.** First, be sure you have a DOE file number; *you cannot be paid without one.*

- If you do not have a file number, see your payroll secretary, and alert your UFT chapter leader.
- If you need an emergency check to tide you over until your regular check arrives, see your payroll secretary and chapter leader.

**An emergency paycheck does not include prior service or differentials.** It takes some time for the DOE to review and approve a new teacher's application for differentials or salary credit for prior service.

- As long as you have applied within six months of being appointed and are approved, you will receive the extra pay you are owed retroactively to your date of appointment.
- If you are not paid by the first payday after 30 days following your application, the DOE *must* pay you 6 percent interest.
- Consult your chapter leader or a salary rep at your UFT borough office if you do not hear from the DOE or receive the added pay after two or three months.

**Other errors.** If you think you are not being paid the correct amount, see your school payroll secretary and your chapter leader. For further help, call your UFT borough office and ask to speak to a salary representative.

### Direct Deposit

Teachers have their paychecks deposited directly into their personal savings or checking account through the department's Electronic Fund Transfer Program. You can enroll between September and April. On paydays you will receive a payroll stub indicating the amount of the deposit.

Teachers can enroll online at <https://payrollportal.nycboe.net>. You can also download the form and submit it directly to the department's Payroll Division, ETP Unit, 65 Court Street, Room 1003, Brooklyn, NY 11201.

## YOUR FINANCIAL FUTURE

### Your Pension (TRS)

With pension benefits eroding nationwide, your pension becomes more valuable every day. By enrolling in the pension system now — with a simple application — you will:

- Build a pension package that could become your largest financial asset down the line.
  - Gain two key protections against the unexpected while you're working:
    - A death benefit to protect your beneficiaries.
    - A special pension in case you need to retire due to a disability.
- As a certified, appointed teacher, you are

automatically a member of the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS)

- Deductions usually begin within two months of your first paycheck.
- These contributions lower your taxable income.
- Check your pay stub for a "TRS 414H" deduction.
- Your pension benefit is vested after 10 years of credited service.

### Steps to Take Now

1. Delaying enrollment may affect benefits for you or your beneficiaries. Shortly after your pension deductions start, you will receive a welcome kit of materials from TRS, which includes an enrollment form. *You must complete this enrollment form and a Designation of Beneficiary form and return them to TRS.* You must include proof of your date of birth when you file the above forms.
2. Call TRS at [1-888-8NYCTRS](tel:1-888-8NYCTRS) or your UFT borough office if you do not receive this kit within three months.

**Note:** If you previously were a member of another New York State public pension system, you may be eligible to purchase or transfer credit for your prior service when you become a member of TRS. Call a pension consultant in your UFT borough office for help.

### Your Tax-Deferred Annuity (TDA)

Another smart move toward a secure retirement is participating in the voluntary tax-deferred annuity (TDA) program. This is a supplemental retirement plan that enables you to invest money for your future on a tax-deferred basis through automatic payroll deductions.

- Federal, state and city income taxes are deferred on contributions and earnings until they are withdrawn.
- You have six investment choices: a guaranteed fixed investment and five variable funds.
- When you retire you can withdraw all or part of these funds or turn them into an annuity.
- The application is included in your TRS welcome kit. Included as well is a separate Designation of Beneficiary form for the TDA that you must file.

### Learn More About Your Pension

To keep you up-to-date on pension matters, the UFT offers an array of services throughout your teaching career:

- Frequent articles in the *New York Teacher*.
  - *PensioNews*, our pension newsletter, including a special start-of-school issue for new teachers.
- Recent issues of *PensioNews*, including the one



Remember: You must enroll now to receive a pension later.

Your UFT pension has:

- A "defined benefit," which guarantees you a set monthly income for life upon retirement (versus the "defined contribution" plans common in industry, whose benefit is not guaranteed.)

- An automatic cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA), preserving your pension's value.

For general UFT Welfare Fund information see [www.uftwf.org/](http://www.uftwf.org/).

The UFT Welfare Fund provides these services free or at minimal cost:

- Prescription drugs
- Dental
- Optical
- Hearing aid

To choose the health plan that's best for you go to [www.uft.org/health-benefits/city-health-plans](http://www.uft.org/health-benefits/city-health-plans) where there is comparison information available.

- Details on each plan in "New York City Health Benefits Program Summary Plan Description Booklet," available from your school payroll secretary or online at [www.nyc.gov/html/olr](http://www.nyc.gov/html/olr), then click on "Health Benefits Program."

for new teachers, are available online at [www.uft.org/our-benefits/pension](http://www.uft.org/our-benefits/pension).

- Speakers for chapter meetings or faculty conferences.
- Pension consultants in each borough office available for telephone questions or for personal

## BENEFITS

As a UFT member, you have one of the best health-benefits packages anywhere.

At a time when many workers have no health benefits and higher costs are leading many employers to reduce existing benefits, the union has maintained quality benefits and even made improvements.

As a full-time teacher, you are entitled to:

- A choice of health plans, which city unions jointly negotiate for their members. There is a health plan for every need, from free plans like HIP or basic GHI to a range of plans that will fit your family's needs. The plans are listed on the [nyc.gov/olr](http://nyc.gov/olr) website. Click on health benefits.

- Supplemental benefits such as dental, optical, hearing and prescription drug coverage are provided by the union through the UFT Welfare Fund.
- Optional additional benefits are available through our state and national affiliates, NYSUT and AFT.
- Sick days are earned, one per month, after the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month.

Together, these benefits represent savings to you worth thousands of dollars a year.

## INSURANCE HEALTH BENEFITS

Although you are covered from your first day of work, you must enroll in a health plan within 30 days of your first day on payroll. If you are not happy with your health plan, you can switch next year or any other year (during open enrollment). Some key points:

Your plan provides hospitalization and medical coverage for you, your spouse or domestic partner, and your dependent children up to age 26. Additionally, adult dependent children from age 26-29 may be eligible to purchase coverage, under New York State legislation. Remember to ask about tax consequences related to domestic partner coverage.

interviews by appointment.

- Special start-of-school boroughwide meetings.
- Pension clinics.
- Three elected teacher-members on the Teachers' Retirement Board to represent your interests.

### How to Sign Up for Health Insurance Benefits

- Ask your school payroll secretary for a Department of Education ERB form. Fill it out and attach all required documentation. Keep copies of all of your completed forms in your personal file at home. For more information, employees can contact HR Connect at 65 Court Street, Room 102, Brooklyn, NY 11201, at [1-718-935-4000](tel:1-718-935-4000) and also visit the NYC Department of Education Website at <http://nyc.schools.gov>.
- Although the UFT Welfare Fund has no direct responsibility for administering the health plans, its staff will answer your questions and advocate for you if you have difficulties with a claim.

## UFT WELFARE FUND BENEFITS

UFT Welfare Fund benefits plans cover you, your spouse or domestic partner, and your eligible dependents. These plans include:

- **Prescription Drug Plan.** This plan covers prescription drugs (but not those sold over the counter).
  - Be sure to save receipts for prescription drugs you paid for before receiving your drug card so you can be reimbursed.
  - When you need to fill a prescription, go to a participating pharmacy, show your UFT Welfare Fund drug card, and pay a co-payment.
  - If you need to use drugs over a long period of time (known as "maintenance drugs") you can get a 90-day supply using the Mail Order Delivery option, which is convenient and less expensive when using generic or brand-name drugs. For this option, get mail order envelopes from your chapter leader or by calling the Welfare Fund Hotline at [1-212-539-0539](tel:1-212-539-0539).
- The **UFT Welfare Fund** drug formulary is a great



tool for understanding whether a prescription drug is covered, your co-pay cost, and how to obtain it. The formulary is available on the UFT Welfare Fund website at [www.uftwf.org](http://www.uftwf.org).

- **Dental plan.** Through the Welfare Fund you can choose between two plans:
    - A dental HMO (Dentcare) with no co-payment or
    - A Scheduled Benefit Plan that allows you, your spouse or domestic partner, and your eligible dependents to use participating dentists (at no charge or with a small co-payment) or nonparticipating dentists with reimbursement according to the dental fee schedule.
  - **Optical plan.** It covers the cost of an eye exam and eyeglasses entirely or gives you an allowance that you can apply toward an upgrade.
    - You may also elect to purchase contact lenses and receive a credit as per the fee schedule.
    - The Fund will issue you an optical plan voucher that explains the details of the plan. Members can order the voucher either online at [www.uftwf.org](http://www.uftwf.org) or by calling the hotline at 1-212-539-0539.
  - **Hearing aid.** Members are entitled to one hearing aid every three years.
    - Participating providers have agreed to offer a second aid, if necessary, at a reduced rate.
    - The Fund will issue you a hearing aid voucher that explains the details of the plan. Members can order the voucher either online at [www.uftwf.org](http://www.uftwf.org) or by calling the hotline at 1-212-539-0539.
- The following Welfare Fund benefits are available only for you and not your dependents:
- **Disability insurance.** Qualifying pedagogues may be covered for \$475 per week for a maximum of 52 weeks. Call the UFT Welfare Fund at 1-212-539-0500 if you need an application or more details.
  - **Death benefit.** When you enroll in the UFT Welfare Fund, you should designate a beneficiary in case of death.
    - The younger you are, the higher the death benefit will be, starting at \$30,000 and declining through the years.
    - This complements the death benefit that accrues through the pension system or any other life insurance you may have.

You can learn about all of your available benefits by reading “The Red Apple” benefit booklet or on the UFT Welfare Fund website: [www.uftwf.org](http://www.uftwf.org).

## UFT WELFARE FUND ENROLLMENT

Beyond the medical and hospitalization benefits you receive through the city’s health plans, you also have an array of additional benefits through the UFT Welfare Fund, including dental, optical, hearing and prescription drugs.

- You must enroll in the Welfare Fund separately from enrolling in a health plan. There are no waiting periods for benefits once you enroll as an eligible member.
- The fastest and easiest way to enroll is online at [www.uftwf.org](http://www.uftwf.org). This will expedite access to benefits for you and your dependents.
- Alternatively, your UFT chapter leader has Welfare Fund enrollment forms. Mail one directly to the Welfare Fund at the address on the form.
- If your address or marital status changes you can update it through the online “change of status” process at [www.uftwf.org](http://www.uftwf.org), or ask your chapter leader for a blue “Change of Status” packet or phone the UFT Welfare Fund forms hotline at 1-212-539-0539.
- Within two weeks of enrolling, you should receive a UFT Welfare Fund drug card, which is your identification for purchasing prescription drugs. Call the Welfare Fund if your card is delayed. Your name will be the only one listed on the card, although the names of your eligible dependents will appear on the pharmacist’s screen.
- You’ll also receive a booklet called “The Red Apple” which describes the full range of your benefits. It’s available online.
- You are covered as soon as you enroll and will be reimbursed if you need to fill a prescription before your card arrives.
- You can download Welfare Fund reimbursement, dental and most other forms. Or you can phone the Fund’s Forms Hotline at 1-212-535-0539. The website also has lists of participating panelists, updates on benefits, links to providers’ websites and answers to frequently asked questions.



### Tips for choosing a health plan:

- If you like your existing doctors, check which plan they participate in.
- A comparison chart for HMO plans is at [www.nyc.gov/html/olr/downloads/pdf/healthb/hmo\\_charts.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/olr/downloads/pdf/healthb/hmo_charts.pdf).
- A comparison chart for other health plans is at: [www.nyc.gov/html/olr/downloads/pdf/healthb/epo\\_charts.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/olr/downloads/pdf/healthb/epo_charts.pdf).

- The *New York Teacher* prints both charts in September.

Download medical forms from [www.uftwf.org/forms](http://www.uftwf.org/forms).

See [www.uftwf.org/](http://www.uftwf.org/) for:

- The latest information on your drug plan.
- A link to the drug formulary.
- A link to MEDEO website for maintenance drugs.

Go to [www.uft.org/health-benefits](http://www.uft.org/health-benefits) to see who’s a participating provider for you:

- Dental
- Hearing aid
- Optical
- Retail network maintenance-drug providers

Questions about certification and courses? Contact the UFT TeacherLine, Monday to Friday, 4 to 6 p.m., at 1-212-253-8800 or e-mail [teacherline@uft.org](mailto:teacherline@uft.org) or call UFT Certification Services at 1-212-420-1830.

Find more details about your contractual rights as a UFT member at [www.uft.org/our-rights](http://www.uft.org/our-rights).

# CERTIFICATION PRIMER FOR NEW TEACHERS

Do you know whether you have a Professional or Initial Certificate? Are you clear about your requirements under a Transitional A or Transitional B Certificate? Are you aware of your deadlines for completing your requirements if you are working under an Extended or Renewed Provisional Certificate?

If you are confused about these or other aspects of your state certification, you’re not alone. In recent years, the State Education Department (SED) increased the number of certificate categories to more than 10, each with different requirements and deadlines. And the UFT is fielding many questions from newer teachers looking for clear, understandable and reliable answers.

“The state provided alternative routes to certification to give prospective teachers greater flexibility, and that’s a good thing,” notes Nanette Sanchez-Rosario, UFT special representative for certification and licensing. “But new teachers don’t always know which type of certificate they have, and that could get them into trouble or even cost them their job in the NYC public school system if they don’t understand their requirements and meet their deadlines.”

To help teachers find their way, the union has a team of UFT consultants and educational liaisons. They, in turn, offer workshops in schools or UFT borough offices and respond to teachers’ questions in person, by telephone and via email. To address the most common points of confusion, we’ve prepared this brief certification primer. If you need more specific information, make an appointment with the UFT Certification Services Department at UFT headquarters at 52 Broadway at 1-212-420-1830. You can also speak to an educational liaison in your UFT borough office or email [www.teacherline@uft.org](mailto:www.teacherline@uft.org).

### Check Your Credentials

To answer any questions about your certification, you first must know the type of certificate you currently hold. You’ll find that by checking the face of your state certificate. Also, first-year teachers can consult a recent New York City Department of Education (DOE) email that clearly identifies individual appointment, licensing and certification details, including codes and dates. (The UFT has asked the DOE to issue a similar document to previously hired

teachers, as well.)

Once you know your certificate type and the expiration date, it’s possible to determine the requirements you need to fulfill and how much time you have to complete them. If you have not already done so, be sure to register on the SED website for a TEACH online account (go to [www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert) and click the box on the right). This will enable you to track the requirements you have already met and those you still need to meet.

Here are the most common types of certificates New York City teachers hold:

**INITIAL CERTIFICATE.** This is the entry level certificate. With this certificate, you have five years from the issue date to complete the following requirements for a professional certificate:

- A master’s degree;
- 12 graduate credits in the certificate area’s content core or a related field;
- Three years of full-time teaching experience;
- One year of mentoring; and
- U.S. citizenship or permanent residency.

**PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE.** With this advanced certificate, you have met all current state requirements. However, even after you achieve your professional certificate, the SED requires you to complete 175 hours of professional development (35 hours per year) within five years of the issue date to keep your certificate valid.

### Special Situations

Under special circumstances, the SED may issue temporary certificates to candidates who do not meet all the qualifications for an initial certificate but who fill a specific educational/recruitment need. Here are a few examples:

**TRANSITIONAL A CERTIFICATE.** Districts that need teachers in specific technical or vocational fields may offer this temporary certificate to candidates who have related work experience but who do not meet all the requirements for an initial certificate. With this certificate, you have three years from the issue date to complete the requirements for a career and technical education initial certificate. For details on those requirements, call an educational liaison in your UFT borough office or UFT Certification Services at 1-212-420-1830.

**TRANSITIONAL B CERTIFICATE.** This temporary certificate is issued to those enrolled in an alternative teacher certification program, such as Teaching Fellows. The college in which you are enrolled for the master's degree under this alternative teacher certification program is responsible for recommending you to the SED for a Transitional B Certificate. To ensure that you will fulfill the state and No Child Left Behind mandates as a "highly qualified" teacher, it is very important that the title of your Transitional B Certificate matches:

- a. the master's program in which you are enrolled; and
- b. the teaching position for which you were hired.

You have three years from the issue date of your Transitional B Certificate to complete your master's degree and fulfill any test or other requirements for the initial or professional certificate. When you have done so, your college must recommend you for either the initial or professional certificate, whichever pertains.

**INTERNSHIP CERTIFICATE.** Students enrolled in an approved graduate teacher education program may qualify for this certificate, provided they have completed half of the program's credit hours. The graduate school has to request this certificate for you and it allows you to teach full time in a position that matches the certificate title. You have two years to complete your course and test requirements for the initial certificate; in addition, your college must recommend you for the initial certificate. You cannot renew or extend your Internship Certificate.

**CONDITIONAL INITIAL CERTIFICATE.** If you hold a teaching certificate in the same or equivalent title from another state, the SED may determine that you are eligible for a Conditional Initial Certificate even if you do not meet all New York State requirements. If you hold this certificate, you must meet the following requirements within two years of the issue date:

- Pass the LAST, ATS-W and CST certification exams (the UFT Teacher Center offers coaching sessions for the LAST and ATS-W exams)
- Complete the Child Abuse Recognition Workshop (available at low cost through the UFT)
- Complete the Violence Prevention Training Workshop (offered at low cost through the UFT School Safety Department).

In addition, within five years of the issue date of your Conditional Initial Certificate, you must complete all requirements for the professional certificate.

**TIME-EXTENDED CERTIFICATE.** Rarely, the SED issues this temporary certificate to give a candidate with a provisional certificate some extra time to

complete all requirements for permanent certification. If you hold an extended certificate, be sure to fulfill your remaining requirements within the time limits specified in the extension. (Note: New York State no longer issues provisional or permanent certificates to teachers who are applying for new certification)

### Am I Done Yet?

Even after you have passed all your tests, fulfilled all your mandates and achieved all your degrees, you're still not quite done. Remember that no certificate is issued automatically.

Once you complete your requirements, you have to apply to the SED online at [www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert) for your professional certificate. Check your TEACH online account for the documents you need to submit together with your \$100 application fee. Make copies of everything before you send them in. Mail your packet "Return Receipt Requested" and file the receipt with the copies of your paperwork.

Since it takes time to process your application, (sometimes up to six months) it's a good idea to complete all your requirements early and to apply at least six months before your initial certificate expires. Also, if you move, remember to notify the DOE, the SED and the UFT about your change of address. Otherwise you may not receive mailed notices or certificates and may miss important deadlines or other vital information.

### TeacherLine for Certification Questions

The UFT's TeacherLine provides phone help for questions about certification and your New York City teaching appointment.

Hours of operation: Monday-Friday, 4-6 p.m.

For assistance you can also email TeacherLine at [teacherline@uft.org](mailto:teacherline@uft.org) or call 1-212-253-8800.

## TO KEEP YOUR STATE PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE VALID

New York State requires teachers who have obtained professional certification to complete 175 hours of professional development every five years (35 hours per year) to keep their professional certificate valid. It is the responsibility of the New York City Department of Education to provide the guidance for completing this requirement and the



### Don't wait to complete your requirements for certification!

The New York State Board of Regents has approved new certification requirements, scheduled to take effect on May 1, 2014, which include new exams for initial and, in some certificate areas, professional certification. **Teachers who apply for their first certificate on or before April 30, 2014 and who have completed all of their requirements by April 30, 2014 will not be required to take the new set of exams.**

Questions about certification or appointment? Call the certification expert in your UFT borough office. Ask to speak to an educational liaison.

To register or find dates for state examinations go to [www.nystce.nesinc.com](http://www.nystce.nesinc.com).

For the schedule of UFT test coaching courses watch the new teacher pages of the *New York Teacher* or go to [www.ufttc.org](http://www.ufttc.org) and click on "conferences."

For UFT professional development opportunities, go to [www.ufttc.org](http://www.ufttc.org) and click on "conferences."

mechanism for reporting to SED.

Decisions regarding content, delivery and providers of professional development are within the purview of the New York City Department of Education. In general, however, such activities may be school based as well as outside conferences, seminars, workshops or college or in-service courses. The UFT Teacher Center offers many professional development activities that teachers with professional certificates can use to meet this requirement.

Here are some common questions and answers teachers have about the 175 hour requirement:

### When does the first professional development period for an individual certificate holder begin?

The professional development period for the certificate holder begins on July 1 following the effective date of the certificate.

- For those who received their professional certificate with an effective date of September 1, 2012 or February 1, 2013 the first professional development cycle is July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2017.
- For those who received their professional certificate with an effective date of September 1, 2013 or February 1, 2014 the professional development cycle is July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2018.

### Can I report professional development activities that were completed before this July 1 date?

No. Hours completed before the beginning date of the professional development period are not applicable toward meeting the requirement and should not be reported.

### Can I complete the 175 hours at any time during the first five years, or must I complete 35 hours each year?

Regulations do not specify that any portion of the required hours be completed annually. However, it is recommended that certificate holders maintain a steady progression of professional development activities over the five-year period and not take on an overwhelming number of activities in any one year.

### What if I hold two professional certificates in different areas? Do I have to do double the hours?

No. You need only complete a total of 175 hours for each five-year professional development period. The cycle begins on July 1 following the issuance of your first professional certificate and continues on that five-year cycle, regardless of the date any additional professional certificates may have been issued.

**In New York City, who is responsible for**

### providing professional development for certificate holders subject to the professional development requirement?

Provision of professional development for all city teachers is a responsibility of the New York City Department of Education. Each school provides at least 35 hours of professional development on a yearly basis.

### In New York City, is record keeping and reporting of completed professional development considered a responsibility of the DOE or the individual teacher?

It is expected that the DOE will report to the Office of Teaching Initiatives on behalf of all teachers in its employ who must fulfill this requirement.

### What is my record-keeping responsibility?

Professional development activities should be logged each year.

Attach documentation of outside activities.

[Download a tracking form at [www.uft.org/new-teachers/maintaining-your-certification](http://www.uft.org/new-teachers/maintaining-your-certification).]

- ✓ Have the principal sign off on your log.
- ✓ Keep a file of your yearly logs and documentation throughout your career.
- ✓ Complete and submit the five-year tracking form sent to you by the DOE at the time it is requested. Keep the original for your personal records.
- ✓ Give your school a copy for your file.

The DOE will electronically notify the New York State Education Department that you have met the professional development requirement so that your professional certificate stays valid. This notification will have to be done every five years.

If you have questions or need additional information, visit the New York State Education Department website at [www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/maintaincert.html](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/maintaincert.html) or call your UFT borough office and speak to an educational liaison.

## MEETING STATE AND CITY REQUIREMENTS

The UFT offers many programs and services to help you hone your skills and meet certification and licensing requirements. You can turn to the union for:

- **Certification.** Get advice or assistance about your certification requirements through TeacherLine at 1-212-253-8800.
- **Coaching for tests.** Low-cost coaching sessions help you prepare for these state-mandated exams: – The Liberal Arts and Science Test (LAST).



- The Assessment of Teaching Skills–Written (ATS-W).
- The LAST – Writing for the Essay.

**Mandated Workshops.** To help you fulfill additional New York State certification mandated workshop requirements our UFT education programs offer the following workshops at a low cost to members:

- **Child abuse detection and reporting.** This is a two-hour course in child abuse recognition and reporting, for those who have not already fulfilled this state requirement. Times and locations appear in the *New York Teacher* educational supplement, which the UFT mails in August, January and June, or you can find them online at [www.ufttc.org](http://www.ufttc.org) (click on “conferences”).
- **Violence prevention.** The New York State Education Department requires all new teachers to take a violence prevention workshop. This two-hour course, offered throughout the school year by the UFT School Safety Department, meets state requirements for certification. Times and locations appear in the *New York Teacher* educational supplement, which the UFT mails in August, January and June, or you can find them online at [www.ufttc.org](http://www.ufttc.org) (click on “conferences”).
- **The needs of children with autism.** The New York State Education Department requires all teachers who are seeking initial or professional state certification in special education to take a three-hour workshop in the needs of children with autism. This workshop is a one-day, three-hour session and meets the requirements for New York State certification. Times and locations appear in the *New York Teacher* educational supplement,

which the UFT mails in August, January and June, or you can find them online at [www.ufttc.org](http://www.ufttc.org) (click on “conferences”).

## MEETING CREDIT OR DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

You undoubtedly know that you have to earn a master’s degree. But did you know that you’ll also earn more money when you get your master’s — and that you’ll earn even more if you have a master’s plus 30 credits and qualify for the “second differential.”

By taking courses or enrolling in a master’s or certificate program through the UFT Teacher Center, you’ll not only get a good education, but often save money, too, at most of the participating colleges. These courses are taught by UFT colleagues, experienced classroom teachers who combine theory with practical applications you can use every day.

- **Credit-bearing courses**, some with reduced tuition. The UFT Teacher Center schedules more than 500 undergraduate and graduate courses each year. Look for the educational supplement to the *New York Teacher*, mailed to all members before each term, in the fall, spring and summer. Or go to [www.ufttc.org](http://www.ufttc.org) for listings.
- **Master’s degree and certificate programs.** These Teacher Center programs, offered in conjunction with several area colleges and universities, are fully described in the educational supplement to the *New York Teacher*.

## PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

### UFT Teacher Centers

The Teacher Center operates sites at approximately 300 schools of all levels in all regions of the city. There you can:

- Find instructional resources, computer access and the math and literacy coaches at those schools.
- Plan instruction, lessons, units and projects with Teacher Center staff.
- Problem-solve classroom management situations.
- Learn to use multimedia equipment to prepare for interdisciplinary teaching.
- Take professional development seminars and courses.

### Networking, Learning Opportunities

If you want a change of scene, to meet other new teachers who are facing the same challenges and to expand your repertoire of skills, the Teacher Center can help. It offers:

- Study groups, seminars, summer institutes and content area conferences and courses.
- Exciting conferences throughout the year focusing on educational issues. Recent ones included “Unpacking The Common Core Learning Standards” and “Supporting Language and Content Learning for English Language Learners.”



- Many of these professional activities are cost free or low-fee. For current listings, see the union paper, *New York Teacher’s TNT* (The Newer Teacher) page and [www.ufttc.org](http://www.ufttc.org).

### Master’s Degrees and College Credits

Thousands of UFT members enroll each year in the UFT Teacher Center’s own “university.” In partnership with a variety of colleges, the union provides reduced-tuition graduate-level courses to enable you to qualify for state certification or a salary differential, earn a master’s degree or simply upgrade your teaching skills.

For the master’s programs, you have to apply to and be accepted by the sponsoring university. Among the degree programs, which have diverse concentrations too complex to detail here, are those in:

- Dual education and special education (grades 1-6).
  - Instructional technology.
  - Liberal studies.
  - Literacy.
  - Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), with an optional bilingual extension.
  - Urban and multicultural education.
- Certificate programs include:
- Computers in education.
  - Instructional technology and global perspectives.
  - Teacher leadership.

There also are graduate-level general education classes in which you can explore subjects that interest you while earning credits toward salary differentials. They cover everything from assessment and behavior management to reading and teaching strategies to mathematics and special education.

### National Board Certification

After you have completed three years of teaching experience, you might consider working toward voluntary national board certification — a designation that not only would bring you to the city’s top salary differential, but also would mark your emergence as one of the nation’s most accomplished teachers.

National certification comes from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, an organization that grew out of an idea from our

national affiliate, the American Federation of Teachers. The UFT Teacher Center furthers this vision by providing support through the demanding certification process. This certification attests that you have reached a level of excellence in your field based on rigorous standards. The standards are primarily written for and by teachers and articulate exemplary teaching practices.

For more information on national board certification:

- See the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards website at [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org). Use the drop-down menu to see how to apply.

### UFT Spring Conference and Teacher Union Day

Every year the UFT holds two gala events for all its members. In November there’s Teacher Union Day, when the UFT remembers the strike in 1960 that led to the first UFT negotiated contract. At that event the union honors its members, old and new, for their service to the union cause. It provides an opportunity for new teachers to learn about the struggles that shaped this union in the past and to be a part of the union in the future.

In May there’s the UFT Spring Conference. Educators, parents, advocates, elected officials and representatives of the city and state departments of education gather to debate, discuss and present information about the latest in educational practice and policy in workshops, forums and speak-outs, many designed especially for our newer members. There are exhibitors on hand and a luncheon at which the union bestows the coveted John Dewey Award upon a person who has advanced the cause of teachers and teacher unions. Past recipients of this award include Eleanor Roosevelt, Martin Luther King Jr. and Edward Kennedy. Many school chapters attend as a group, bringing along members of their school leadership teams.

For more information on these events look for ads in the *New York Teacher* and on our UFT website, [www.uft.org](http://www.uft.org).

## UFT PROFESSIONAL COMMITTEES

UFT Professional Committees can enhance your academic growth through such activities as conferences, seminars, trips and newsletters. Organized according to subject areas, ethnic heritage

and special interests, they allow teachers to meet with like-minded colleagues to keep abreast of the latest developments in their areas of interest.

Look in the Events column or the UFT Calendar



in the *New York Teacher* for upcoming activities. Call 1-212-598-7772 for contact information for specific committees.

- African American Heritage
- Albanian American Heritage
- Asian American Heritage
- Association of Teachers of Social Studies/UFT
- George Fesko Committee for Members who are Capably Disabled
- Computer & Technology
- English as a Second Language/Bilingual
- English Language Arts Council (ELAC)/UFT
- Hellenic American Educators Assn/UFT
- Hispanic Affairs
- Humane Education
- Irish American Heritage
- Italian American Heritage
- Jewish Heritage
- Library
- Math Teachers
- NYC Art Teachers Association/UFT (NYCATA)
- NYC Association of Foreign Language Teachers/ UFT
- NYC Coaches Association/UFT
- NYC Dance Educators/UFT
- NYC Music Teachers Association/UFT
- Outdoor Environmental Education

- Per Diems
- Players (Theater)
- Runners
- Science
- Social and Recreational
- Special Education
- Veterans
- Women's Rights

### CLEP Exams

The College Level Examination Program (CLEP) offers teachers the opportunity to receive college credits by earning qualifying scores on CLEP tests. Subject to limitations, CLEP credits earned in professional education subjects and other appropriate subjects may be applied toward meeting the certification/licensing requirements of the New York State Education Department and/or the New York City Department of Education.

In addition, appropriate CLEP credits may be applied toward salary differentials. Go to <http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/DHR/TeacherPrincipalSchoolProfessionals/ProfessionalDevelopment/College+Level+Examination+Program+CLEP.htm>.

To view a listing of CLEP tests available, visit: <http://clep.collegeboard.org/>.

## SOME ESSENTIAL THINGS TO KNOW

### ...ABOUT SUPPLIES

#### Books and Supplies

It's the school's responsibility to provide you with basic instructional supplies, such as paper, chalk, math manipulatives and textbooks, so that you can provide the best possible education to your students. If you find you're digging into your own wallet to buy the basics, talk to your chapter leader about utilizing the contract's "basic school supplies" provision.

#### Teacher's Choice

Because of their commitment to students, teachers often spend hundreds of dollars of their own money to buy supplementary materials to enhance their students' learning. To help defray the cost, the

UFT conceived of the Teacher's Choice program and won funding, even in tough budget years like this one, from the City Council.

Some tips for getting the most out of your Teacher's Choice money:

- The current allocation is \$57.00 for all teachers.
- You may start spending the money on Aug.1 at the store or Internet site of your choice, but no later than February 28.
- Keep receipts for all your purchases.
- Submit them in March with forms you can get at <https://payrollportal.nycboe.net/payrollportalweb/main.aspx>.
- You can join with colleagues to pool some or all of the money to buy more expensive items to share.
- See your school secretary or chapter leader with any questions.



A comprehensive UFT fact sheet on transfers and excessing is at [www.uft.org/teaching/transfer-opportunities](http://www.uft.org/teaching/transfer-opportunities). The DOE posts available openings at its Open Market website.

### DonorsChoose

DonorsChoose.org is another way to provide your students with the books, technology and supplies that they need to learn. You propose ideas for needed resources, and donors around the nation may choose to fund your project. Here's how to participate:

1. Register at [www.donorschoose.org](http://www.donorschoose.org).
2. Write a brief project description (approximately 400 words) describing the proposed project and how students will benefit.
3. Identify the specific resources requested and their prices, and answer some brief questions.

### ...ABOUT CLASS SIZE

#### Class Size

Since its inception, the UFT has made reducing class size a priority so teachers can give each child more individual attention. Early on, when classes often exceeded 40, we won class-size limits in the contract: usually 32 in elementary grades, 33 in intermediate schools and 34 in high schools.

In recent years we have fought for even smaller classes, finally securing city and state legislation for a cap of 28 in grades 1 to 3, 25 in kindergarten and 18 in pre-K. Tell your UFT chapter leader if your class(es) exceed(s) these limits.

Our goal is an average 20 students per class in grades K-3 and 24 students in grades 9-12.

### ...ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY

#### Testing

Accountability is the buzzword at the Department of Education these days, and this current administration measures success by scores on high-stakes tests.

- Students in grades 3-8 take state tests in English language arts and mathematics. In grades 3, 5, 7 and 8, the results of these tests are used to determine promotion.
- High school students must pass at least five subject-specific Regents exams in order to graduate.
- There is also a regimen of in-class, "low stakes" periodic assessments to keep close track of student progress throughout the school year. The premise

is that teachers will be able to tailor instruction to their students' needs by analyzing the test results, with the aid of a new data management system.

Every school receives an annual progress report with a grade from A to F. The grades are based largely on students' year-to-year progress as measured by math and reading tests. The progress reports, which are posted online, also take into account attendance rates and, at the UFT's urging, the results of parent and teacher surveys about the school. An F rating can lead to a school's closing or a change of leadership.

The UFT has voiced objections to the intense focus on high-stakes tests and the time that test preparation takes from instruction. The union has opposed the use of student test scores as the sole measure to evaluate teachers. It is a misguided use of student data, it is unfair to teachers and can hurt students.

#### Official School File

Every teacher has an official file at school that contains the administration's observation reports, annual evaluation sheets and other materials.

- You have a right to see and photocopy the contents of your file at any time, with advance notice.
- Your supervisor can place an item in your file only if you have seen and signed it. *Signing an item does not mean you agree with it.*
- Sometimes a supervisor wants to place a letter of reprimand in a file, which could later affect your evaluation. If you believe the letter is inaccurate, unfair or otherwise objectionable, you can append a response. See your chapter leader for assistance in formulating it.
- A contractual right allows you to remove any negative material in your file that has not been used in a disciplinary action against you three years from the date of the material.

### ...ABOUT POSITION CHANGES

#### Transfers

Under the "open market" transfer system, all teachers, no matter how many years of service, have the right to transfer to another school. It is a way to match teachers with schools in which they want to work. Teachers who want to transfer are free to seek positions in any district, in any school with vacancies,

with no restrictions.

- Schools must begin to advertise their vacancies on the Open Market website starting April 15.
- If the new school wants to hire you, you do not need permission or a release from your current principal and can transfer freely through Aug. 7.

## Excessing

Excessing occurs when a school has more teachers in a specific license area than it needs because of a loss of students or funding. Excessing can also occur when schools close or are reorganized. Excessing is done in reverse seniority order within each license area; the person with the least seniority in that license area would be the first one excessed. Excessing seniority is determined by your total time in the New York City school system.

By June 15, or as soon thereafter as possible, principals must notify staff if they are at risk of being excessed. If you are excessed you may apply for vacancies citywide under the open market transfer system.

If you do not secure a position you *still have a job* with all your benefits and your regular rate of pay. This job security provision was part of the contract that eliminated all forced transfers, and created the open market. The DOE will assign you to an Absent Teacher Reserve (ATR) position. An ATR position is a full-time job substituting for absent teachers in a school. You may continue to seek a regular teaching position while you are an ATR.

To be sure your seniority information is correct, check the excessing list in your school, available from your chapter leader. Depending on the situation and the number of teachers affected, rules for excessing of staff sometimes can be complicated. If you have any questions always ask your chapter leader or call your UFT borough office.

## ...ABOUT APPOINTMENT, PROBATION AND TENURE

### Appointment

When a New York City school permanently hires you to fill a vacancy you are “appointed” to that position. Your appointment must match your state certification by both subject and level.

If your appointment or your teaching *assignment does not match your state certification, speak to your chapter leader or call your UFT borough office immediately.*

The State Education Department has very strict certification rules, and if they are not met you can be dismissed regardless of your classroom performance. You can be appointed under one license at a time, and your license area of appointment determines the area in which you will be granted tenure. Sometimes your certification permits you to be appointed under another license; however, if you agree to switch to a new appointment you are on probation again. In addition, if you switch to another license before you receive tenure in your first license you must serve probation in that license, and there may be other ramifications. *Contact your UFT borough office before you switch your license.* In any case, your salary does not change when your license changes. Be sure you check with your payroll secretary that your appointment date is correctly entered in the computer.

### The Probationary Period

After you are appointed to a position, state law requires you serve a three-year probationary period. During that time supervisors are supposed to observe you in your classroom several times a year and evaluate you in more than 20 areas including classroom management, lesson planning, presentation skills and how you will use the data from student test scores to help you as you plan instruction.

Generally, at the end of three years of acceptable service, you will be entitled to due process rights under Section 3020a of the state Education Law, which governs the discipline and dismissal of tenured teachers. This is commonly called acquiring tenure, but it is effectively the completion of your probationary period.

If the DOE intends to discontinue, that is, terminate, your service at any time prior to the completion of your probationary period you must be given 30 calendar days’ notice. If you are discontinued, call your UFT borough office. They will assign an advocate to assist you in fighting the termination.

Sometimes a principal will ask you to sign a document stating that you agree to an extension of your probationary period beyond the three years. If this occurs *contact your chapter leader or your UFT borough office immediately* so we can arrange, if necessary, for an attorney to review the document in order to protect your rights as a probationary teacher.

There are two ways to reduce your probationary period:

- If you worked as a regular substitute in the same



### What has the UFT won for newer teachers?

During negotiations, the union puts a high priority on new teachers. Here are some examples of that. The union:

- Prevented layoffs of nearly 4,500 new teachers in 2010 and 2012.
- Refused to cut pay and benefits for incoming teachers to fund a raise for others.
- Added a \$1,000/year longevity payment for teachers with 5 to 10 years of service.
- Increased starting salaries significantly.
- Launched a new transfer system that vastly increases newer teachers’ opportunities to change schools.

license and in the same school level you can reduce the normal three-year probationary period by up to two years. This is called Jarema Credit and you should apply if you think you are eligible. The application form is online at <http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/DHR/DHRforms/>.

- Another way is called “traveling tenure.” If you received tenure in one license area and elect to take an appointment in a new license area or if you were tenured in another school district in New York State, you should apply to have your probationary period reduced to two years.

If you think you are eligible for either of these options, or have any questions, contact your UFT borough office.

### Tenure

Under New York State law, appointed teachers achieve tenure after completing a probationary period (usually three years) and fulfilling all requirements for the professional certificate. In New York City, tenure is granted in your license appointment area. Having tenure means you may not be disciplined or terminated without due process. As a tenured teacher you have the right to a hearing before an independent arbitrator regarding any charges brought against you. This due process right protects you from being fired for personal, arbitrary or political reasons.

As described above, the process for determining whether or not you will get tenure is rigorous, and tenure is not automatic at the end of the probationary period.

You must:

- Complete all your state certification and city licensing requirements, file an application and receive professional certification.
- Have a record of acceptable service during your probationary period.
- Be recommended for tenure by your principal.

### How can teachers prepare for their tenure decision?

The UFT encourages teachers to be proactive in preparing for their tenure decision. Here are some steps you can take throughout your probationary period:

- If your principal has not initiated a meeting about your tenure decision, ask for an appointment to find out where things stand and what is expected of you. Do this even if your tenure decision is a year or two away so you have time on your side.
- Become familiar with the multiple sources of evidence for each factor that principals will use to

prepare their tenure recommendations.

- Put together a professional portfolio of your effectiveness as a teacher. Organize your portfolio with a table of contents to separate the various components. Include a cross-section of your work but be selective in choosing the materials to include. Add a brief explanation or context for each piece of evidence you include and be sure to show how you differentiate to accommodate children with diverse abilities.
- Every spring the UFT offers workshops in our borough offices to help teachers prepare for tenure. Check the union newspaper, *New York Teacher* and the UFT website [www.uft.org](http://www.uft.org) for a schedule of tenure workshops.

## YOUR WORK DAY AND WORK YEAR

- In single-session schools, the regular school day for classes is 6 hours and 20 minutes, exclusive of lunch.
- Teachers also work 37.5 minutes, usually after student dismissal, Monday through Thursday. During this time, they may tutor students — up to 10 general ed students or five special ed students — to prepare them for tests or engage in small-group instruction — or teachers may engage in professional development activities depending on the school.
- The day cannot start earlier than 8 a.m. or go later than 3:45 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- Faculty conferences are scheduled one Monday a month, for up to 40 minutes. But even on those days the school day may not end later than 3:45 p.m.
- In District 75 (citywide special education) buildings and District 75 self contained classes in other school sites, the school day may be 6 hours and 50 minutes.
- Non-District 75 self-contained special education classrooms have either a 6 hour and 50 minute day, or a 6 hour and 37.5 minute day Monday through Thursday and 6 hours and 20 minutes on Friday.

### Professional Development Time

- Once a month, after school faculty and grade conference time should be used for professional development.
- Professional days (students not present):

- Election Day.
- The first Thursday in June (Brooklyn-Queens Day), regardless of which borough you teach in.
- Other days designated by the chancellor.
- On professional development days, the school day is 6 hours and 50 minutes.

### Work Year

- The school year in New York City normally ranges from 183–191 days, depending on when the holidays fall.
- You report to your school on the Tuesday after Labor Day. Most of this time is allocated to classroom preparation (students are not present).
- Generally, the school year ends on the weekday before the last Monday in June.
- The school holidays are:
  - Rosh Hashanah (September or October).
  - Yom Kippur (September or October).
  - Columbus Day (second Monday in October).
  - Veterans Day (Nov. 11).
  - Thanksgiving (fourth Thursday and Friday in November).
  - Winter recess (includes Christmas and New Year’s Day).
  - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s, birthday (third Monday in January).
  - February midwinter recess (includes Presidents’ Day).
  - Spring recess (includes Good Friday, Easter and Passover).
  - Memorial Day (last Monday in May).

## HOME-SCHOOL CONNECTIONS

### Meeting Parents

Parents and guardians can be teachers’ most important allies in encouraging students to learn, and the union favors as much communication with them as possible. Cordial and forthright conversations can create a true home-school partnership, and it’s best to foster that throughout the school year, when students are doing well, and not just when there’s a problem. Here is some advice for arranging and conducting productive meetings:

- Find out what your school’s policies and procedures are.

- Begin with a positive statement about the child.
- Focus on joint goals for student achievement.
- Enlist the parent’s/guardian’s support for student success.
- End with a summary of next steps for yourself, parents and the student.

### Open School Week

- Parent involvement — at home and in school — is a sure bet for raising student achievement. If you are looking to strengthen the home-school partnership, you’ll have a good opportunity twice each year during Open School Week. Get ready by:
- Giving each student the UFT’s brochure “Welcome to Open School Week” to bring home to their parents.
  - Reviewing each student’s progress and preparing some samples of student work.
  - Developing a list of suggestions for how parents can support and supervise homework.
- During your conference:**
- Spend at least a few minutes with each child’s parents/guardians.
  - Inquire about any situations at home that may affect the child’s schoolwork.
  - Review the rules and discipline code with parents of chronically disruptive children.
  - Let parents know how to get homework for an absent child and how to get in touch with you, if necessary.

### Dial-A-Teacher 1-212-777-3380

Don’t forget to tell your students about the UFT’s telephone homework helpline, Dial-A-Teacher, at [1-212-777-3380](tel:1-212-777-3380). It’s open Monday through Thursday from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. during the school year.

Through this invaluable program, created and operated by the UFT, students and even parents can get help with math, reading, writing and science in languages including Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, English, French, Greek, Haitian-Creole, Hebrew, Italian, Korean, Russian and Spanish.

Dial-A-Teacher is housed at the union’s headquarters. The experienced teachers at Dial-A-Teacher have most of the books that your students will be using, enabling them to teach students over the phone.

Request Dial-A-Teacher stickers to give out to students and parents or a flyer to display in your room. Call [1-212-598- 9205](tel:1-212-598-9205) or fax your request on school letterhead to [1-212-510-6420](tel:1-212-510-6420).



#### One example of what COPE has done for YOU.

- As a new teacher, you automatically belong to a pension system.
- Thanks to UFT political action we’ve preserved age 55 retirement for teachers.
- Over the course of your career this will save you tens of thousands of dollars.

#### REGISTER AND VOTE.

If you have never voted or have moved since the last election, be sure to register. In New York City, you can get registration information through the Board of Elections at <http://vote.nyc.ny.us>. In order to vote in future primaries, you must register your political affiliation as well.

## POLITICAL ACTION AND COPE

At a time when those who don’t like teacher unions and public education have great influence around the country, it is especially important that educators and those concerned about the future of public education make our voices heard.

Promoting our educational agenda and reinforcing a pro-public education, pro-labor political atmosphere while safeguarding the professional and economic interests of UFT members, children and working people takes money. That’s why the UFT has COPE, its Committee on Political Education.

Federal law restricts how the UFT can use dues money to engage in the political process and that’s why your voluntary COPE funds are so important. Only with member contributions to COPE can the union make its voice heard in shaping the laws, budgets and protections our members and our public schools need to succeed. Most of the issues UFT members face arise from the political environment. That’s why:

- We lobby state and city legislators for the resources you’ll need to ensure your students receive a quality education.
- We forge alliances with community groups to mount public pressure, such as in our campaign for smaller class size and adequate funding for our schools.
- We support elected officials who stand with us on education, labor and human rights.

The simplest way to support your union’s political action is through voluntary contributions to COPE. See your chapter leader to sign up for COPE. Most members contribute just \$10 per pay check to support activities such as lobbying, printing and mailing of literature, campaign support for endorsed candidates, rallies, voter registration drives, online informational campaigns and phone banks.

We’ll also use our COPE dollars to (among other goals):

- Stop devastating budget cuts to our schools.
- Revamp the Title 1 law.
- Ensure the right of all workers to organize as a union.
- Maintain and improve healthcare benefits.

Whether it is yet another attack on teachers and their unions or a push for private school vouchers, a cut in the education budget or an attempt to make student test scores or a principal’s whim the basis for how much you’ll be paid, your COPE dollars will be there to fight it off.

### Your COPE dollars at work

Some victories:

- Fought off attempts to evaluate teachers based solely upon the inappropriate use of student scores on a single standardized math or English language arts exam.
- Won whistleblower protection that shields educators from retribution for reporting conduct that could harm schoolchildren.
- Required the Board of Education to pay interest on late salary payments.
- Secured legislation that makes assaults on teachers a felony.
- Gained collective bargaining rights for 28,000 home daycare providers who work with many of our pre-school children.

**ASK YOUR CHAPTER LEADER FOR A COPE CARD AND DONATE TO YOUR FUTURE AND THAT OF YOUR STUDENTS.**

## GETTING INFORMATION

### The *New York Teacher*

Approximately every three weeks, we’ll mail you the *New York Teacher*, the union’s award-winning newspaper. Until you are on our membership mailing list, ask your chapter leader for a copy.

The paper reports on developments — educational, political, economic and social — that affect

- New York City teachers (a state edition is enclosed in the centerfold). Our newspaper paints a vivid portrait of the work that UFT members do in our schools day in and day out. Regular features include:
- “The Newer Teacher” section (TNT), filled with the specific information that new teachers need, including a checklist of reminders.
- Ads for UFT conferences, coaching sessions and other professional development programs sponsored by the Teacher Center. Look for special registration coupons.
- “UFT Calendar,” listing upcoming workshops and meetings.
- “Just for Fun,” providing discounted entertainment opportunities and trips to regional



- points of interest. Mail in the coupon for items that interest you.
- “Grants, Awards and Freebies,” listing education-related grant opportunities. Many teachers, including those in their first years on the job, have funded class or school projects by writing grant proposals.
  - Three times a year (fall, spring and summer) we’ll mail you a special educational supplement listing Teacher Center courses that you can take to meet certification requirements and increase your salary by earning differentials.

## UFT Online

- At [www.uft.org](http://www.uft.org) you will find breaking news, UFT publications, your UFT contract, Welfare Fund forms and more. Through our website, a click of the mouse will connect you to:
- A section devoted entirely to new teachers at [www.uft.org/new\\_teacher](http://www.uft.org/new_teacher). There you’ll find information about certification, licensing, classroom management, union programs that support new teachers and features drawn from our newspaper’s Newer Teacher (TNT) page.
  - And to help you in the classroom, we’re gathering links to websites useful for lesson-planning, motivating students and solving common classroom problems.

# SAFETY AND DISCIPLINE

As a professional, you expect to have a safe working environment. Sadly, that isn’t always the case in New York City’s schools. Some of your students may be disruptive or have other behavior problems. Or intruders may come into your building. It happens.

Serious learning cannot take place in an atmosphere of fear or chaos. That’s why the UFT has worked to make schools safer. The results are evident. The fact that schools have school safety agents, security systems, alternative settings for disruptive students, a zero-tolerance policy on weapons, and a systemwide Student Discipline Code is in significant part due to union pressure and expertise.

Here are a few things you can do to protect yourself, your students and your school:

## Rules

- Start in your own classroom by defining

- In addition to the Newer Teacher section, other sections are devoted to news and issues — including statements by union officers and press releases on current issues — as well as sections for parents, member services, functional chapters and others.
- Information about citywide and boroughwide instructional networks, conferences, seminars and summer institutes sponsored by the Teacher Center, the UFT’s professional development arm, at [www.ufttc.org](http://www.ufttc.org).
- A searchable UFT contract at [www.uft.org/our-rights/contracts](http://www.uft.org/our-rights/contracts), where you can find salary schedules and specific contract provisions.
- A variety of union publications covering such subjects as workplace stress, financial matters, school safety issues, health services, pregnancy and childcare benefits and others.
- News, columns and features from the *New York Teacher*, at [www.uft.org/news/ny-teacher](http://www.uft.org/news/ny-teacher).
- The Welfare Fund area at [www.uftwf.org/](http://www.uftwf.org/) for forms or information, such as the names of participating dentists and optical services by ZIP code.
- Everything you should know about pensions and other financial matters at [www.uft.org/our-benefits/pension](http://www.uft.org/our-benefits/pension).
- Even a link to the UFT blog, [www.edwize.org](http://www.edwize.org).

consequences for behavior from the first day of school — and then standing by your rules.

- Become aware of the systemwide Student Discipline Code and any variations on it that your school has adopted. Stand behind that code, too. It might be worthwhile discussing it with your students.
- The discipline code calls for “progressive discipline,” a list of infractions that are matched to punishments that can or must be taken in each case.
  - For minor infractions, such as misbehaving in class, a parent may be called to school for a conference.
  - For the most serious offenses, such as having drugs or possessing a firearm, a student may be suspended and transferred to an alternate learning center. There, students with a history of violent or disruptive behavior can learn without



**School closing alerts:** In the event of bad weather, the chancellor will decide before 6 a.m. whether to close schools or have a delayed opening. He will alert:

- The city 311 Information Line.
- The DOE website <http://schools.nyc.gov>.
- Radio stations  
WINS (1010 AM)  
WCBS (880 AM)  
WABC (770 AM)  
WLIB (1190 AM)  
WADO (1280 AM)  
WBLS (107.5 FM)  
WNYE (91.5 FM)
- TV stations  
WCBS (Chl 2)  
WNBC (Chl 4)  
WNYW (Fox Chl 5)  
WABC (Chl 7)  
WNYE (Chl 25)  
Univision Chl 41  
NY 1  
(Cablevision Chl 1)

Sick? Check [www.uft.org/our-rights/absences](http://www.uft.org/our-rights/absences) under Absence.

If you are injured on the job, see your UFT chapter leader about your rights and how to preserve them.

The UFT’s Victim Support Program at **1-212-598-6853** contacts every member who becomes a victim of a school-based incident, offering advice, counseling and assistance with police, the judicial system and the DOE’s medical division.

The DOE will reimburse you up to \$100 for stolen or destroyed property, but being a less attractive target to the thief is the best policy. Lock up your valuables.

Report all safety incidents at [www.uft.org](http://www.uft.org). Look for the orange button.

disturbing their classmates. In addition, they will get the counseling and other support they need to overcome their behavior problems.

- Learn about the school safety plan that your principal is obliged by contract to negotiate with your union chapter. This is a plan specific to your building that details every facet of security in your school. If you experience any safety-related problems, talk with your chapter leader to see if the safety plan addresses them. If the administration or the school system fails to enforce the plan, the union can take action.
- The UFT’s Violence Prevention Program works with individuals and schools to improve safety. Your chapter leader may ask representatives to come to your school.
- If you should have the misfortune to be injured by a student or intruder, the UFT’s Victim Support Program will help you on a one-to-one basis.

## Student Fights

- Observe students for signs of hostility and aggression.
- Use nonviolent techniques to break up fights or confrontations. Speak loudly to order students to stop fighting.
- Send for help, by intercom or phone if possible, or by means of another staff member or a student. Many schools use a special pass with your classroom’s room number which, if carried out of the room, is a code to say there’s an emergency there.
- Remember that a trained school safety agent, supervisor or dean can do more than you can do alone and will serve as a witness if any injuries occur to you, another staff member or a child.
- Breaking up fights is the prime cause of school related injury among UFT members. DO NOT get between fighting students unless you believe it is absolutely necessary to prevent serious injury.

## Intruders

- Every school is required to have “intruder alert procedures.” This message must not alert the intruder that he/she has been discovered. Only the staff should recognize the message

## Securing Personal Property

- Try to minimize theft of your belongings by not wearing or bringing valuables to school.
- Keep your pocketbook, briefcase and coat under lock and key.
- Never walk away from your laptop.

- Keep expensive jewelry concealed.
- Never display large amounts of cash.

## Reporting Incidents

If you are involved in an incident or become aware of a violation of the safety plan, immediately report it to your chapter leader and school administration. To make sure your school is as safe as possible, you (or your chapter leader) should also report what happened to the UFT so the union can address the situation, make sure your school has the safety resources it needs and keep accurate records. The easiest way to report is online.

- Go to [www.uft.org/uft-incident-report](http://www.uft.org/uft-incident-report) and follow the directions. Also on the bottom of the UFT website homepage at [www.uft.org](http://www.uft.org) in the Member Quick Links box, click on “UFT Safety Incident Report.”
- If you need immediate advice, call the Emergency Hotline at **1-212-701-9407**.

## Discipline Code

It’s the principal’s responsibility to maintain security, safety and discipline, and you have a right to insist that misbehaving students are disciplined. The guidelines the school must follow are established by the Department of Education’s system wide Discipline Code, which:

- Establishes a ladder of consequences with specific mandatory disciplinary responses to match the severity of various student infractions.
- Sets minimum and maximum penalties for each degree of severity.
- Varies penalties by grade level, either K-5 or 6-12, so that the age and general maturity of the student are considered. Some infractions may not apply to students in grades K-3.
- Specifies that whenever possible, interventions should begin with the lowest level of disciplinary response.
- Provides graduated penalties for students who engage in repeated misbehaviors despite the prior imposition of appropriate disciplinary measures.

### What the principal must do:

- While in most cases the principal has some discretion about what action to take, he or she must impose minimal or mandated disciplinary actions.
- If a principal has not followed the steps required by the code — for example, if he or she has allowed a student who should have been suspended back in your classroom — you should speak to your chapter leader and UFT borough

Action	Grade Level	Severity Level	Range of Responses
Engaging in scholastic dishonesty (e.g., cheating, plagiarism)	K-5	2	7 responses, ranging from teacher admonishment to parent-teacher conference to principal's suspension.
Insubordinate behavior	K-5	3	9 responses, the above plus in-school suspension, removal from classroom by teacher.
Disruptive behavior in the classroom or falsely activating a fire alarm	6-12	3	11 responses, ranging from admonishment by staff to superintendent's suspension.
Assault/using force against school personnel	K-5 and 6-12	5	Mandatory superintendent's suspension with possibility of removal to a special setting or school.

Discipline code is updated annually, as required by state law.

safety representative for advice about how best to resolve the matter.

Special Education Students

It is a common misperception that disciplinary consequences cannot be imposed on students with disabilities who commit disciplinary infractions. Students with disabilities are subject to the Discipline Code, but they are entitled to additional procedural protections. The procedures for disciplining students with disabilities are fully explained in Chancellor's Regulation A-443. Both the UFT Safety and Health Department and the office of the vice president from special education are able to assist members with questions about safety and discipline issues involving students with disabilities, as well as IEP availability and providing a special education complaint form.

School Safety Plan

The contract requires that every school have an individually tailored school safety plan. It's a blueprint for handling all sorts of potentially dangerous situations, from routine activities like screening visitors to crises that require an emergency response.

- Every fall, the safety plan must be reviewed and, if necessary, revised.
- The principal is required to *collaborate* with your union chapter on reviewing and updating the plan, not just consult it.
- If you believe your school needs to change or add procedures to address potentially threatening

situations or changed circumstances, contact your chapter leader.

- If you see that provisions of the safety plan are being violated, alert your chapter leader. She or he will try to resolve such matters informally or report it to the UFT district representative.
- Failing that, he or she may decide to file a safety grievance, a high-priority complaint that must be answered within 24 hours and has a fast-track appeal process.
- *If you do not want to personally file such a grievance, your chapter leader can do it in the chapter's name.*

Violence Prevention Training

You can take advantage of several union initiatives to learn how to enhance your own safety in school:

- The union's School Safety Department offers violence prevention training. These workshops will show you how to identify the warning signs of danger to yourself and your students and teach you ways to defuse volatile situations before they reach the point of no return. Using research from psychology and practical knowledge gained from law enforcement, these workshops have enabled thousands of members to avoid confrontations that could have led to violence.
- In addition, the union offers many workshops on classroom management, on teaching students self-discipline and on instructional techniques that engage students so they do not start misbehaving



Learn how to protect yourself – and how your UFT chapter can improve school safety by going to [www.uft.org/our-rights/school-safety-planning](http://www.uft.org/our-rights/school-safety-planning) and get safety forms at [www.uft.org/forms/safety](http://www.uft.org/forms/safety).

out of restlessness. Check the *New York Teacher* for upcoming sessions.

What if I'm Injured?

Unfortunately, UFT members do get injured in the line of duty, or even assaulted in schools. If this should happen to you:

- The UFT's Victim Support Program will contact you to offer every assistance – legal, medical and psychological.
- If you are assaulted:
  - First, get medical treatment.
  - Second, file a criminal complaint report with NYPD.
  - Third, complete the paperwork required to protect your rights. Filing delays could cost you money.

Here are the forms you may need to file:

- **Department of Education Occurrence Report:** Principal must file within 24 hours; you sign to acknowledge seeing it and can add a statement.
- **Comprehensive Accident Report:** Details nature of your injuries; principal files within 24 hours.
- **UFT Incident Form:** Notifies UFT School Safety and Health Department; your chapter leader can give you this form or it can be completed online.
- **Application for Excuse of Absence (OP 198):** You and your physician complete it. For job related injuries, staff members apply for line-of-duty leave (section "C" on form).
- **Confidential Medical Form (OP 407):** If the nature of the incident or injury is confidential, have your doctor fill this out and mail it to the board's medical office.
- **Assignment Form (OP 200):** This legal form, which must be notarized, states that if you sue and collect a settlement larger than the salary paid during your convalescence, you will refund your salary to the board.
- **Request for Reimbursement of Medical Expenses-Assault (OP 505A):** In most cases, the DOE will reimburse you for all of your out-of-pocket medical expenses if you are assaulted.
- **Request for Reimbursement for Loss of or Damage to Personal Property (OP 504):** The board will reimburse you for stolen or destroyed

property up to \$100, but only if the property is of the type that is normally brought into schools. (Warning: Don't bring valuables!). There are special procedures for eyeglasses damaged in assault cases.

Be BRAVE Against Bullying

The UFT, in partnership with Respect for All is waging a BRAVE (Building Respect, Acceptance and Voice through Education) campaign to help students fight bullying and make New York City's public schools safe and supportive for all students.

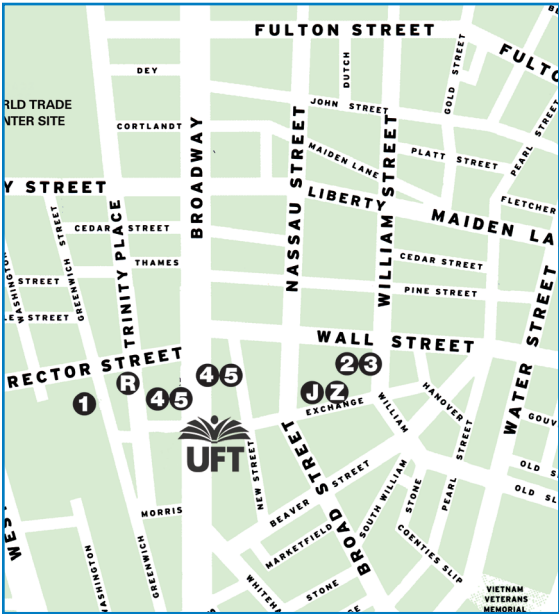
The BRAVE Campaign provides tools, knowledge and support for UFT members so they can be more proactive in confronting and stopping bullying. Go to the website [www.uft.org/BRAVE](http://www.uft.org/BRAVE) for resources and workshops so you can learn how to intervene when you see bullying happen, find out how to speak to your students about bullying and be informed about the latest research and interventions.

The BRAVE Campaign also hosts a confidential hotline for students, Mon - Fri, 2:30 to 9:30 p.m. at [1-212-709-3222](tel:1-212-709-3222) or [www.uft.org/BRAVE](http://www.uft.org/BRAVE). You can also text **BRAVE** to 43961.

Member Assistance Program

We all experience challenges in our personal and professional lives from time to time. While people often handle these on their own, some issues can be difficult to manage without a helping hand. The Member Assistance Program (MAP) has trained professional counselors who guide you through the problems that can put your health and job in jeopardy. You can expect our services to be confidential, professional and supportive. The MAP provides short-term counseling to in-service UFT members by professionally trained mental health staff as well as referrals to outside resources.

The MAP phone number is [1-212-701-9620](tel:1-212-701-9620) and the email address is [mapinfo@uft.org](mailto:mapinfo@uft.org). Our normal hours are 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., Monday through Friday (summer hours are 9 a.m. – 5:15 p.m., Monday through Thursday). Please note that sessions are by appointment only; no walk-ins. MAP services are provided at no cost to members.



UFT Headquarters

Subway Stops

Check the MTA website at [www.mta.info](http://www.mta.info) for transit updates

**4 or 5 train** (first car from uptown; last car from Brooklyn) to the Wall Street station: “Broadway and Exchange Place” or “Broadway and Rector Street” exit. Walk 1 block south.

**2 or 3 train** (first car from uptown; last car from Brooklyn) to the Wall Street station: “Wall Street” exit. Walk 1 block south on William Street to Exchange Place. Walk 2 blocks west on Exchange Place and make a left onto Broadway. Walk a half-block south to 50/52 Broadway.

**R train** (last car from uptown; first car from Brooklyn) to the Rector Street station: “Rector Street and Trinity Place SW” exit. Walk 1 block east on Rector Street and turn onto Broadway. Walk 1.5 blocks south to 50/52 Broadway.

**J or Z train** (first car from uptown; last car from Brooklyn) to the Broad Street station: “Exchange Place and Broad Street” exit. Walk 2 blocks west on Exchange Place and turn left onto Broadway. Walk a half-block south to 50/52 Broadway.

**1 train** (first car from uptown) to the Rector Street station: “Morris Street and Trinity Place” exit. Walk 1 block east on Morris Street. Make a left on Broadway and walk a half-block north to 50/52 Broadway.

UFT Officers

Michael Mulgrew .....	President
Emil Pietromonaco .....	Secretary
Mel Aaronson .....	Treasurer
LeRoy Barr .....	Assistant Secretary
Mona Romain .....	Assistant Treasurer
Carmen Alvarez .....	VP for special education
Karen Alford .....	VP for elementary schools
Richard Mantell.....	VP for intermediate/middle schools
Catalina Fortino .....	VP for educational issues
Anne Goldman .....	VP for non-DOE employees
Janella Hinds.....	VP for academic high schools
Sterling Roberson.....	VP for career and technical high schools

Borough Representatives

Bronx .....	José Vargas
2500 Halsey St., Bronx, NY 10461 .....	1-718-379-6200
Brooklyn .....	Howard Schoor
335 Adams St., 25th fl., Brooklyn, NY 11201.....	1-718-852-4900
Manhattan.....	Evelyn DeJesus
52 Broadway, 10th fl., New York, NY 10004 .....	1-212-598-6800
Queens.....	Rona Freiser
97-77 Queens Blvd., Rego Park, NY 11374.....	1-718-275-4400
Staten Island .....	Debra Penny
4456 Amboy Rd, 2nd fl., Staten Island, NY 10312 .....	1-718-605-1400



Like to blog? Want to read the “diaries” of other new teachers? Seeking a fresh angle on education or labor issues? Or want to voice your opinion? Check out the UFT’s blog, Edwize at [www.edwize.org](http://www.edwize.org).

UFT links for New Teachers:  
New Teachers - [www.uft.org/new\\_teachers](http://www.uft.org/new_teachers)

Member Services -  
[www.uft.org/our-benefits/member-help-programs](http://www.uft.org/our-benefits/member-help-programs)

Contract - [www.uft.org/our-rights/contracts](http://www.uft.org/our-rights/contracts)

New York Teacher and News and Issues --  
[www.uft.org/news/ny-teacher](http://www.uft.org/news/ny-teacher)

Publications - [www.uft.org/news/publications/](http://www.uft.org/news/publications/)

UFT Teacher Center -  
[www.ufttc.org](http://www.ufttc.org)

Pregnancy/Childcare Benefits - Read or download “Not for Women Only” at [www.uft.org/our-rights/know-your-rights/maternity-leave](http://www.uft.org/our-rights/know-your-rights/maternity-leave)

HELP@HAND

Key Phone Numbers, Email Addresses and Web Sites

HEADQUARTERS

52 Broadway, New York, NY 10004 ..... 1-212-777-7500

BOROUGH OFFICES

For help with contractual rights and benefits, salaries, grievances and pensions.

BRAVE (ANTI-BULLYING) CONFIDENTIAL HOTLINE FOR STUDENTS

(Mon - Fri, 2:30 to 9:30 p.m.) ..... 1-212-709-3222  
[www.uft.org/BRAVE](http://www.uft.org/BRAVE) Text: BRAVE to 43961

CERTIFICATION SERVICES

Advice and assistance about certification and licensing..... 1-212-420-1830

COACHING SESSIONS

To help prepare for NYS teaching exams ..... 1-212-475-3737

DIAL-A-TEACHER

Homework help for students and parents (Mon.-Thurs., 4-7 p.m.)..... 1-212-777-3380

**HOTLINE** Daily recorded announcements ..... 1-212-777-0190  
[www.uft.org/hotline](http://www.uft.org/hotline)

MEMBER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Provides short-term counseling to in-service UFT members (Mon - Fri, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.) ..... 1-212-701-9620  
email: [mapinfo@uft.org](mailto:mapinfo@uft.org)

MORTGAGE SERVICES

Information on mortgages and housing programs  
[www.uft.org/our-benefits/mortgage-discounts](http://www.uft.org/our-benefits/mortgage-discounts)

NYSUT MEMBER BENEFITS TRUST INFORMATION

Insurance and discount programs ..... 1-800-626-8101  
[www1.nysut.org/cps/rde/xchg/nysut/hs.xsl/49.htm](http://www1.nysut.org/cps/rde/xchg/nysut/hs.xsl/49.htm)

PENSION CONSULTANTS

Pension questions and individual consultations. Call your borough office.  
[www.uft.org/our-benefits/pension](http://www.uft.org/our-benefits/pension)

PROFESSIONAL COMMITTEES

Discussions and activities on subject areas, ethnic issues and special interests..... 1-212-598-7772  
[www.uft.org/committees/](http://www.uft.org/committees/)

SAFETY AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT

To report an incident, call your borough office or go to [www.uft.org](http://www.uft.org) and click on: Safety/Discipline Report  
Emergency Hotline:..... 1-212-701-9407

Environmental issues (asbestos, lead, air quality, blood-borne pathogens, etc.) ..... 1-212-598-7740  
[www.uft.org/our-rights/environmental-health](http://www.uft.org/our-rights/environmental-health)

Violence Prevention Workshops ..... 1-718-722-6966

Victim Support Program

Practical assistance and psychological support for schools and individuals..... 1-212-598-6853  
For information on safety issues:..... [uftsafety@uft.org](mailto:uftsafety@uft.org)  
For information on health issues: ..... [healthsafety@uft.org](mailto:healthsafety@uft.org)

STRESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Workshops to help manage work-related stress..... 1-212-475-3737  
[www.uft.org/teaching/nys-mandated-and-educational-workshops](http://www.uft.org/teaching/nys-mandated-and-educational-workshops)

TEACHER CENTER

College courses, workshops and school-based and citywide professional development ..... 1-212-475-3737  
[www.ufttc.org](http://www.ufttc.org)

TEACHER EVALUATION NEWS & DOCUMENTS

[www.uft.org/evaluation](http://www.uft.org/evaluation)

TEACHERLINE

Phone help for certification and licensure problems, instructional strategies, classroom management and other professional issues (Mon.–Fri., 4–6 p.m.) ..... 1-212-253-8800  
email: [teacherline@uft.org](mailto:teacherline@uft.org)

UFT WEB SITE

[www.uft.org](http://www.uft.org)

WELFARE FUND

Information/assistance with health coverage... 1-212-539-0500  
[www.uftwf.org](http://www.uftwf.org)

Welfare Fund forms ..... 1-212-539-0539  
[www.uft.org/forms/health-benefits](http://www.uft.org/forms/health-benefits)



# RECORD OF YOUR NEW YORK STATE CERTIFICATION AND NEW YORK CITY LICENSING/APPOINTMENT

## PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

File #: \_\_\_\_\_

SED TEACH On-Line Account Password: \_\_\_\_\_

NYS Certification(s): \_\_\_\_\_

NYC License/Appointment

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Code: \_\_\_\_\_

(You will receive an email from the NYC DOE with license/ap-  
pointment information)

## MENTORING

Name of mentor\_\_\_\_\_

Date First Met \_\_\_\_\_

Full-time assignment of Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

## CREDENTIALS

Complete the information for your current status and update as applicable.

(Note: Not all certificate types will apply to your situation.)

Type of Certificate	Effective Date
NYS Transitional A Certificate; Career and Technical Education Teachers Only (Valid For Three Years)	
NYS Transitional B Certificate (Valid For Three Years)	
NYS Conditional Initial Certification (Out-Of-State Credentials)	
NYS Internship Certificate (Valid For Two Years)	
NYS Initial Certificate (Valid For Five Years)	
NYS Professional Certificate (175 hours of Professional Development required every five years to keep this certificate valid)	
NYC License/Appointment	

## TENURE

Tenure is granted for your license/appointment area in NYC.  
(You must complete the two components listed below to  
achieve permanent tenure in your license/appointment area.)

Component of Tenure	Date Granted
Completion of Probation	
Professional Certificate	

## SALARY INFORMATION

### Step Placement

If you have previous experience working as a teacher, you may be able to begin on a higher step.

Apply to the DOE to determine whether you are eligible.

Date of Application	Salary Step	Anniversary Date

## DIFFERENTIALS

Each time you earn credits that meet the next salary level you must submit an online application to the NYC DOE.

Credits	Application Date	Date Granted	Effective Date
C2 (BA+30 Credits)			
C2+ID (BA+60 Credits)			
C2+PD (MA or 36 Credits in an area of specialization)			
C2+ID+PD			
C6+PD (MA+30 Credits)			

## Notes

